



Grant Application Instructions for the NTIA/DHS Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) Grant Program

This package provides the Mississippi Wireless Communication Commission's grant guidance and application materials needed to apply to the State of Mississippi, through the Wireless Communication Commission (WCC), for Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) Grant Program funding, including an explanation of the funding awarded to the State of Mississippi, eligibility criteria, detailed application instructions and requirements, and application review information.

1. Background

The Public Safety Interoperable Communications (PSIC) Grant Program is a one-time grant program intended to enhance interoperable communications with respect to voice, data, and/or video signals. The United States National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), in consultation with the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS), under the direction and authority of Public Laws 109-171, 109-459 and 110-53, established, developed and will jointly implement the grant program to assist public safety agencies in the acquisition of, deployment of, or training for the use of interoperable communications systems that utilize, or enable interoperability with communications that can utilize, reallocated public safety spectrum for radio communications.

The Mississippi Office of Homeland Security (MOHS), as the State Administrative Agency, applied for funding on behalf of the State of Mississippi from the FY 2007 PSIC Grant Program.

2. Funding

The State of Mississippi received an allocation of PSIC grant funds in the amount of \$10,989,345, with over 80% of that funding (less \$851,109 allocated for a strategic technology reserve) being passed through to local levels of government. According to the NTIA/DHS program guidance, the funding must be used to assist public safety agencies in the planning and coordination associated with, acquisition of, deployment of, or training for the use of interoperable communications equipment, software and systems that:

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- utilize reallocated public safety spectrum for radio communication;
- enable interoperability with communications systems that can utilize reallocated public safety spectrum for communication; or
- otherwise improve or advance the interoperability of public safety communications systems that utilize other public safety spectrum bands.

Applications for PSIC funds under this grant will be limited to \$200,000.00 per requesting multi-jurisdictional application and are subject to project approval and availability of funds.

3. Reference Source

For more information regarding the PSIC grant offering by NTIA/DHS, please refer to the NTIA/DHS *Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program, Program Guidance and Application Kit*, issued on August 16, 2007 (hereinafter referred to as NTIA/DHS PSIC Grant Guide) which can be accessed at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/psic_guidance20070816.pdf.

IMPORTANT: Please note: Use the NTIA/DHS PSIC Grant Guide *only* for information and reference. The NTIA/DHS PSIC Grant Guide was issued for the purpose of providing directions to the State Administrative Agency (SAA), which is MOHS for the State of Mississippi, for acquiring funds from the PSIC Grant Program to pass through to eligible applicants within the State.

To submit an application for PSIC grant program funding, agencies within the State of Mississippi **must** apply to the WCC in accordance with the instructions that follow in this document, the *FY 2007 Mississippi Wireless Communication Commission Grant Application Instructions*. **Only applications for PSIC Grant Program funding submitted to WCC in accordance with the instructions for submitting applications contained in this WCC Grant Guide will be considered.**

4. Eligible Applicants

Any recipient of the PSIC grant program funds must be a public safety agency that is a state, local, or tribal government entity or nongovernmental organization authorized by such entity, whose sole or principal purpose is to protect safety of life, health, or property. For purposes of this grant, "local government" means a "county, municipality, city, township, local public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments (whether or not incorporated as a non-profit corporation under state law), any other regional or interstate government entity, or any agency or instrumentality of a local government."

5. Limitation on Project Scope

A. Regional and/or Statewide Approach

Proposals submitted need to address solutions that include multiple agencies and multiple jurisdictions to meet the purposes of the PSIC grant program. PSIC funding cannot be allocated for single-agency or single-jurisdiction projects. Applications should propose use of PSIC funding projects (investments) for allowable costs including multiple agencies and/or multiple disciplines. PSIC grant program funds can only support interoperability projects that are multi-jurisdictional and/or regional in scope. For more information, please refer to the NTIA/DHS PSIC Grant Guide, pp. 4-5, which can be accessed at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/psic_guidance20070816.pdf.

B. Project/Award Period

Sub-grantees applying for PSIC funding through the State of Mississippi must show an ability to complete all projects and expend all funds between the dates of **October 1, 2007 and March 31, 2010, which will be grant end date for sub-grantees. No extensions of time beyond March 31, 2010 will be permitted.** No PSIC funds will be awarded or expended to any subrecipient for any project activity or uses or expenditures of funding that do not occur within this time period. Any matching of funds must also occur within this timeframe.

6. Match Requirements

In order to obtain a grant under the grant program, a public safety agency shall agree to provide, from non-federal sources, not less than 20% of the costs of acquiring and deploying the interoperable communications systems funded under the PSIC grant program. Note that the match requirement does not apply to funding used for allowable planning or training costs. As noted above, the match funds requirement must also be met within the timeframe of the grant performance period, i.e. cannot include any funding or in-kind matches that were expended or provided before or after the dates of the grant period. For a detailed explanation of the match requirement for the PSIC grant program, refer to the NTIA/DHS PSIC Grant Guide, page 11, which can be accessed at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/psic_guidance20070816.pdf.

Example: Determine the scope of the total project, and add the acquisition and deployment costs. Multiply that number by 0.80 for the federal share and 0.20 for the non-federal share.

Total Acquisition and Deployment Project Cost: \$10,000 (multiply by 0.80)
Federal Share: \$8,000
Non-Federal Share: \$2,000

7. Allowable Costs

Mississippi received approval through the PSIC Grant Program to utilize grant funds to connect existing trunked radio systems into a radio over IP network, install additional infrastructure to support non-supported areas at the county level, and interconnect remaining non-trunked radio systems into the Mississippi Wireless Information Network (MSWIN) using gateway technology. The overall goal of the MSWIN is to provide a statewide backbone to facilitate the highest levels of interoperability - a "System of Systems." The objective of the PSIC investment is to create intra-county interoperable communications as well as a path to facilitate interoperability or connectivity to the statewide, MSWIN, system. MSWIN is a state project that will build a tower system across Mississippi to provide statewide coverage. The implementation of the MSWIN system will provide the backbone for the development and success of this investment.

PSIC projects will include:

- ❖ **Purchase of 700 MHz radio equipment off of the MSWIN State Contract to operate on MSWIN; and/or**
- ❖ **Upgrading or enlarging existing gateway and bridging solutions to interoperate intra/inter county and with the MSWIN system.**

Meetings and research will be conducted to determine the equipment needed, per county, for connectivity to allow interoperability. Depending on the equipment currently in place, gateway solutions may be most cost effective. There are existing counties with gateway infrastructures, which we would like to integrate into the MSWIN system. The goal is to get county systems with disparate technologies and frequencies linked to one another and the MSWIN system. Many counties do not have interoperability within the county disciplines. We also plan to use gateway technology to bridge the separate systems within the county and/or between contiguous counties. An application for PSIC funds to use IP bridging or gateway technology for intra/inter county interoperability must also include all components required for the local entities to interoperate with the MSWIN system as soon as MSWIN coverage is available. The outcome is to improve interoperability at the intra-county level on a full-time basis with all disciplines and also between counties in the state. Local agency purchases must be to improve daily operations and not just to operate on deployable equipment.

The end users will be all public safety first responder disciplines and the federally recognized Indian Nations in the 82 counties within the State of Mississippi.

The investment will be evaluated as the connectivity is made at each site. A schedule will be developed to test and train the equipment and personnel with the other operating systems until all systems are installed and operational.

The allowable categories for use of PSIC funding are:

1. Planning and Coordination (P&C) – (No Match required for this category)
2. Acquisition (ACQ)
3. Deployment (DEP)
4. Operations and Maintenance (O&M)
5. Construction and Renovation (C&R)
6. Construction Approval Process (CAP)
7. Training (TRG) - (No Match required for this category)

These allowable categories of funding are included on the budget worksheet included in the WCC application package for the FY 2007 PSIC funding. In completing the budget worksheet, include the category abbreviation of each item for which funding is requested in the "Category" column. For a detailed explanation of the allowable costs for the PSIC grant program, refer to the NTIA/DHS PSIC Grant Guide, pp. 36-43, which can be accessed at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/psic_guidance20070816.pdf.

8. Costs Not Allowable

Only the specific categories of costs are allowable. Among the specific costs that are not allowable are:

- Any purchase or obligation made prior to or after the end of the period of performance is not eligible to be reimbursed with federal funds or to be used to meet the non-federal matching requirement.
- Hiring of sworn public safety officers for the purposes of fulfilling traditional public safety duties or to supplant traditional public safety positions and responsibilities.
- Use of funds by a person or entity that is not an eligible PSIC grant fund recipient, i.e. a public safety agency which is a state, local or tribal government entity or authorized nongovernmental organization.

A detailed explanation of the costs not allowable for the PSIC grant program is included in the NTIA/DHS PSIC Grant Guide, pp. 40-41, which can be accessed at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/psic_guidance20070816.pdf.

9. Notice of Intent to Apply and Request for Consultation and Analysis

Interested jurisdictions must notify, in writing, WCC staff at the enclosed addresses, of their interest in applying for grant funding. A required needs analysis and consultation by WCC staff will be scheduled with the agencies in that jurisdiction. The staff will work with the jurisdictions to determine equipment needs and assist with compiling information for the grant application. A follow-up letter will be sent to the local agency documenting the consultation and analysis. This letter will contain the application deadline, which will be thirty (30) days from the date of the letter. To be considered, complete applications must be *received* by the WCC by 5:00 p.m. on the deadline date.

10. Application Review Criteria

In order to meet the Program Funding Goals of the PSIC Grant Program set out in the NTIA/DHS PSIC Grant Guide on pages 2-4, which can be accessed at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/psic_guidance20070816.pdf, WCC will use the following criteria in reviewing and scoring the grant applications. Applicants are encouraged to address these criteria on the narrative portion of the application. The narrative section of the grant application is the "Executive Summary" portion of the "Grant Cover Sheet" included in the application package. Please note that extra pages can be added to permit a narrative that meets all of the criteria listed below.

PSIC Application Review Criteria

1. Consistency with PSIC Program Goal for Technology
 - a. Adopt advanced technological solutions
 - b. Improve spectrum efficiency
 - c. Use cost-effective measures
2. Consistency with PSIC Program Goal for All Hazards Mitigation
 - a. Improved interoperable communications in areas at high risk for natural disasters
 - b. Continue to improve interoperability efforts in urban and metropolitan areas at high risk for threats of terrorism
 - c. Pre-position or secure interoperable communications in advance for immediate deployment in an emergency or major disaster
3. Consistency with Regional Application Goal of the Program
 - a. Multiple jurisdictions involved in the proposed project
 - b. Coverage of the population

- c. Population density
- 4. Evidence of Local Commitment to the Project
 - a. Evidence of signed commitment letters from participating local communities
 - b. Evidence of match funding from participating local communities
 - c. Establishment of governance agreement between participating communities
 - d. Plan for the continuity of effort and sustainability of the project
- 5. Project Feasibility and Impact
 - a. Project budget reasonableness
 - b. Project implementation schedule
 - c. Consistency with Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan

11. Reporting Requirements

Recipients of PSIC funding will be responsible for submitting and providing requested reports, documentation and information as requested by WCC to fulfill the reporting requirements set out in the NTIA/DHS PSIC Grant Guide on pages 32-35, which can be accessed at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/odp/docs/psic_guidance20070816.pdf.

12. Instructions for Completing Applications

The application package must be submitted to the WCC for review based on the criteria listed above.

Deadline for Proposals

A follow-up letter will be sent to the local agency documenting the consultation and analysis. This letter will contain the application deadline, which will be thirty (30) days from the date of the letter. To be considered, complete applications must be *received* by the WCC by 5:00 p.m. on the deadline date to be considered for funding. Faxed or e-mailed submissions will not be accepted. Applications that are incomplete or not completed in accordance with the instructions will not be considered. (See later pages for contact information and addresses for submitting the applications to the WCC.)

Paperwork Required for Application

Important: Each application **must** include two (2) signed copies all of the following to be delivered to WCC:

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- Two (2) printed and signed copies of the **WCC FY 2007 NTIA/DHS PSIC Grant Cover Sheet with Executive Summary**.
- Letters signed by the Chief Elected Officials of each jurisdiction participating in the activities for which funding is requested in the application stating that the jurisdiction will support and participate in the project(s).
- A printed copy of the **FY 07 NTIA/DHS Public Safety Interoperable Communications Grant Program budget worksheet(s)** with all information completed.
- In addition to the above “hard copy,” the “cover sheet,” formatted for Microsoft Word, and the budget worksheet(s), formatted for Microsoft Excel, on a Compact Disc (CD) must be submitted with the application.

The “Cover Sheet” and Budget Worksheet templates are available on the WCC website at www.wcc.ms.gov.

Delivery Addresses for WCC:

Delivery Address for applications submitted by U. S. Mail, hand delivery, FedEx, UPS or other courier:

Mrs. Lana Nicks
Wireless Communication Commission
412 East Woodrow Wilson Avenue, Mail Stop 6601
Jackson, MS 39216
Telephone Number: 601/359-5333 / lnicks@wcc.ms.gov

Contacts for Grant Information

For general grant questions:

Tamra Grimes, Grant Consultant – 662/418-0261 / tgrimes@wcc.ms.gov
Wireless Communication Commission

For questions regarding interoperable communications or technology:

Bill Buffington, Technical Consultant – 601/665-2206 / bbuffington@wcc.ms.gov
Wireless Communication Commission

For questions regarding projects or funding uses:

Bill Roach, Executive Director – 601/359-5333 / bill.roach@its.ms.gov
Wireless Communication Commission

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